

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

ACDA-07 /076 W

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R 230803Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6379

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

DIA WASHDC//AH

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0990

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, FR

SUBJECT: LAO AND FRENCH OFFICIALS COMMENT ON STATE OF

HBS BILATERAL RELATIONS

SUMMARY. CHEF DE CABINET OF LAO FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS TOLD AFP THAT LAOS IS DISTURBED BY ALLEGED ACTIVITIES OF LAO REFUGEES IN FRANCE AND OF CERTAIN FRENCHMEN WHO HAVE BECOME "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDISTS." NEVERTHELESS, HE ADDED, LAOS NEEDS FRENCH AID AND LOOKS FORWARD TO EARLY DISCUSSIONS OF THE SUBJECT. MEANWHILE, FRENCH AMBASSADOR HAS ACKNOWLEDGED TO US SOME OF THE PROBLEMS HE FACES IN DEALING WITH THE NEW LAO REGIME. END SUMMARY.

1. THE INFORMATION MINISTRY'S DAILY NEWS BULLETIN OF APRIL 22 CARRIED A "KHAO SAN PATHET LAO/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE" ARTICLE REPORTING THE VIEWS OF FOREIGN MINISTRY CHEF DE CABINET
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SOUBANH SRITHIRATH ON FRANCO-LAO RELATIONS. IT

PRESUMABLY RESULTED FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH SOUBANH BY
RESIDENT AFP CORRESPONDENT JEAN-CLAUDE FIOL.

2. IN THE INTERVIEW SOUBANH MOUTHED SEVERAL PLATTITUDES
ON THE GENERAL THEME THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES
ARE GOOD AND CAN BE CONTINUED AND IMPROVED ON THE BASIS OF
MUTUAL RESPECT AND NON-INTERFERENCE. HE COMPLAINED, HOWEVER,
THAT LAO "TRAITORS" SUCH AS GENERALS KOU PRASITH, KONG LE
AND ETAM WERE ALLOWED TO "AGITATE IN FRANCE AND CREATE TROUBLES
FOR LAOS." HE ADDED THAT "CERTAIN FRENCH CITIZENS LIVING IN
LAOS OR IN FRANCE ARE ALSO TURNING THEMSELVES INTO COUNTER-
REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDISTS. THIS IS NOT AT ALL FRIENDLY TO
OUR COUNTRY."

3. SOUBANH ALSO SAID THAT LAOS HAD NEED OF DEVELOPMENT AID
FROM ALL FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND PARTICULARLY FROM FRANCE.
HE CONCLUDED THAT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM WOULD NOT
ALTER FRANCO-LAO RELATIONS; THESE WOULD IN THE NEAR FUTURE BE
THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSIONS INTENDED TO LEAD TO NEW BILATERAL
AGREEMENTS ON CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION.

4. COMMENT: WE AND EMBASSY PARIS HAVE REPORTED IN RECENT MONTHS
ON THE TERMINATION OF THE FRENCH MILITARY MISSION, THE SUSPENSION
OF FRENCH CREDITS AND ASSISTANCE TO LAOS, AND SOME OF THE
DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE FRENCH COMMUNITY HERE. THE
BRIEF VISIT IN LATE MARCH OF FORMER MINISTER, DEPUTY AND
AMBASSADOR FRANCOIS MISSOFFE APPEARS TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED
LITTLE, AND A FRENCH EMBOFF HERE CONFIRMED TO US THE
REPORT IN PARIS 08766 (NOTAL) THAT MISSOFFE'S MISSION, AT
LEAST WITH RESPECT TO LAOS, WAS NEVER INTENDED TO BE SO
AMBITIOUS AS MISSOFFE TRIED TO MAKE IT APPEAR. SOUBANH'S
STATEMENT THAT BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WILL BEGIN SOON IS OF
INTEREST; THE FRENCH HAD ORIGINALLY WANTED TALKS, PREFERABLY
IN PARIS, DURING THE FIRST HALF OF MARCH (VIENTIANE 0366, NOTAL),
AND THE ONLY LAO RESPONSE OF WHICH WE WERE AWARE WAS THAT
TALKS SHOULD BE HELD IN VIENTIANE AT SOME UNSPECIFIED LATER
DATE. FOR THE LAO, THE MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE IS THE
RESUMPTION OF FRENCH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. END COMMENT.

5. FRENCH AMBASSADOR CARDI TOLD CHARGE APRIL 22 THAT HE INTENDED
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TO SEEK AN APPOINTMENT WITH PRIME MINISTER KAYSONE PHOMVIHANE
WHEN THE LATTER RETURNED FROM MOSCOW TO CLARIFY A NUMBER
OF MATTERS, NOTABLY THE STATUS OF FRENCH CITIZENS OF LAO
ORIGIN WHOSE FRENCH NATIONALITY THE LPDR WAS UNWILLING TO
RECOGNIZE.

6. CARDI ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE ENCOURAGING THE
LAO TO SEEK AS MUCH AID AS THEY COULD GET FROM NON-COMMUNIST

SOURCES.

7. CONCERNING THE ALLEGATIONS OF ANTI-LPDR ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE, CARDI SAID IT WAS HARD TO DENY OR OTHERWISE COMMENT ON THINGS THAT HAD NEVER HAPPENED, SUCH AS KONG LE'S ALLEGED TRAVEL TO THAILAND. HE HAD REMINDED THE LPDR THAT IT WAS A FRENCH TRADITION TO ADMIT POLITICAL REFUGEES AND THERE WAS NOT MUCH ELSE HE COULD USEFULLY SAY ON THAT SUBJECT.
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